



Bonobos is an online men's clothing site that concentrates on better fit, better fabrics, and better styles in men's clothing and accessories. The company has been an Desk.com client since early beta. John Rote is Ninja Manager at Bonobos.

Easy Setup

Tying in to Other Systems

Wowing Customers

How Bonobos Came to Use Desk.com

John: Our company is 2.5 years old. Before Desk.com, customer service was conducted through Gmail. It was catch-as-catch-can; we would often print out emails and pass the hard copies around. As staff size increased, we ran into problems with volume, so we decided to set up help desk software used by lots of large companies. Getting it set up was a major project, configuration was difficult and expensive (we had to hire someone to do coding). It was complicated and hardwired—not nimble at all. There were lots of features that would never make sense for our business. This experience, though, as unwieldy as it was, it opened our eyes to the "shared in-box" model. That's when I discovered Desk.com

Easy to Get Up and Running

John: When I first saw Desk.com, I was excited about the look and feel of it. It looked pretty nimble, so I thought, "I'll spend a couple of hours poking around, maybe over the weekend we can configure things, then next week I'll get a couple of people testing the system."

Well, the reality was that by lunchtime the next day we had switched over to it entirely. All the agents felt comfortable using it, the interface was friendly, the workflow was immediately improved. Agents could see how many tickets we had, view tweets, see the remaining tasks, and decide on how to allocate resources—on the first day we used the product! It was a revolution in our service and support culture.

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~John Rote, Ninja Manager

Desk.com Tools Make Systematic, Organized Approach Possible

John: Our employees—even those who aren't customer service pros but are eager to participate—are able to use queues and filters to interact with customers in an organized, systematic way.

When, for example, we're launching a new sweater line and getting a lot of questions, those folks from the product team can have full engagement with our customers. This way, the conversation can go deeper and become more intimate. Advocates can talk to product people, and vice versa, and co-creation becomes a reality. Now we're baking this right into the company culture and when it takes root, it's going to grow with us.

Tags and filters and business rules make it easy to see trends, see where interest is, or where bugs are cropping up. We can distill the data and allocate resources appropriately.

What Bonobos Is Planning with Desk.com for the Near Future

John: Reporting is an area where we'll be getting up to speed in the near term. Reporting will become more and more valuable as we scale and as we determine which metrics will be most important, and which we want to make part of our daily dashboard for grading ourselves.

I'm confident that Desk.com is the right product to grow with us. We plan to use the priority filters and escalation filter tools to hone our workflow. It's important to us to measure our response in minutes and hours rather than longer term, so anything we can do to make response time come down will be an important focus.

We'll also be working on fleshing out our Knowledge Base, too. Right now, we operate on mostly individual responses, using macros where we can. We try to add extra information to our responses, anticipating the question that the customer didn't ask, or just keep the dialogue open.

For example, someone might email us with the question, "Can I return an item after washing it?" We might respond, "Yes, you can return any item." But we think great service is anticipating the next question or the unexpressed need, and that's where we can use the Knowledge Base to append an article with more detail about the return process.

Desk.com lets us marry the sniper rifle approach with the shotgun approach. We give them an ultra-specific answer, and set the stage for future interaction. In this way, Desk.com has already raised our basic level of service significantly.

Now we can continue to make refinements and raise the level of engagement. We can become more conversational and intimate. Here's an analogy: we can move from being a better crossing guard to being more of a neighborhood barber—not just the basic delivery of services, but anticipating needs and wants—professional but personable. We can build advocacy.

On Twitter

John: We had never really had any formal process for tweets before Desk.com, but we got a lot of them. Someone would tweet and our staff might copy and paste it into an email and say "get back to this guy."

Now we have tweets collected right in the agent summary screen. We gained the confidence and resources to actually increase our presence on Twitter. Now we actively broadcast questions into the Twitterstream, launch contests, launch products.

We've dramatically increased the number of tweets, and it's an area where we can engage in real time—someone who's broadcasting has the potential to be an advocate and you can get special attention as a potential advocate or evangelist.

Typing In to Other Systems

John: We're using integration URLs to tie in with external systems, we have info links to POS system, a couple of tools as modules on our site, so we can link to specific systems in our back end, like an accounting tool, a sales tool, order history, a couple of forms where we can sign customers up for our mailing list, or put them on a waiting list for a product or product category.

The Story of Follow-Up Macros

John: Customers now don't hit a dead end. Before Desk.com, we might have gotten an email asking about a larger-waist trouser, and we'd have to say something like, "That is planned for the future" without having any automated way to follow up.

Now, using our awesome follow-up macros, we can put that customer on a timed response anywhere from an hour to 30 days in the future. The business rules are set up so that 30 days after that label is applied, it opens the ticket and adds a note to tell agents to follow up. Something like, "We'll check with the warehouse" gets a 1-hour follow-up macro. So now nothing falls through the cracks.

We can respond to the customer very quickly, give them initial information and an interim solution that gets the customer out of limbo. Now I can say "I have that in development right now, I'll notify you when it's available." On our "tickle system"

we set the status as "pending" and add a label saying something like "30 days."

I have 25 cases that are pending follow up right now, and they're not going to get lost because they're right in front of me. *Every one of these 25 cases represents an opportunity to add value.* That's really the type of sophisticated service that sets the stage for the superior customer service experience. Every day we provide fast, good solutions to problems, and we have the ability to impress them and turn them into promoters with the intimate, thoughtful follow up service.

With the system we used before Desk.com, that capability existed, but the coding was expensive and time consuming. It took a lot of time, we had to create a spec and get a consultant. One conversation with Desk.com—a bit of guidance—and it was done.

Notification Emails Using Tags

John: Another thing that rises above the mundane is being able to send notification emails to specific people within our company. We want product people to be in tune, but we don't want to waste their time and make them cull through 100 emails to find the 30 relevant emails to their area of expertise.

Additionally, we don't want to waste a customer service agent's time parsing through a bunch of emails. So we have

Desk.com tags set up. Say I'm responding to a customer who's having trouble with fabric—I add the tag "product" and upon update, it sends it to the product team to whom it's relevant, and at end of day, they can see the 11 emails that are product relevant. It's efficient, keeps them apprised of the conversation, and enables them to see trends and head off challenges.

It gives interested parties the opportunity to weigh in if they want to—it's not uncommon for any employee to add their voice to the dialogue, dig deeper, or reach out. The customer always gets that immediate response, but a day later they get a thoughtful email that isn't technically "necessary" but is illuminative.

This is such a cool way to get everyone at [Bonobos](#) involved with the pieces of conversation relevant to what they do.

About Desk.com:

Desk.com helps small businesses deliver affordable service and support to the "new customer"—socially active and with high expectations. The system is a social help desk that services customers by traditional methods but also by social channels like Twitter and Facebook. Teams work from an easy-to-use desktop, so queries never fall through the cracks. The Desk.com mobile app frees teams from their desks and allows service "on the go."